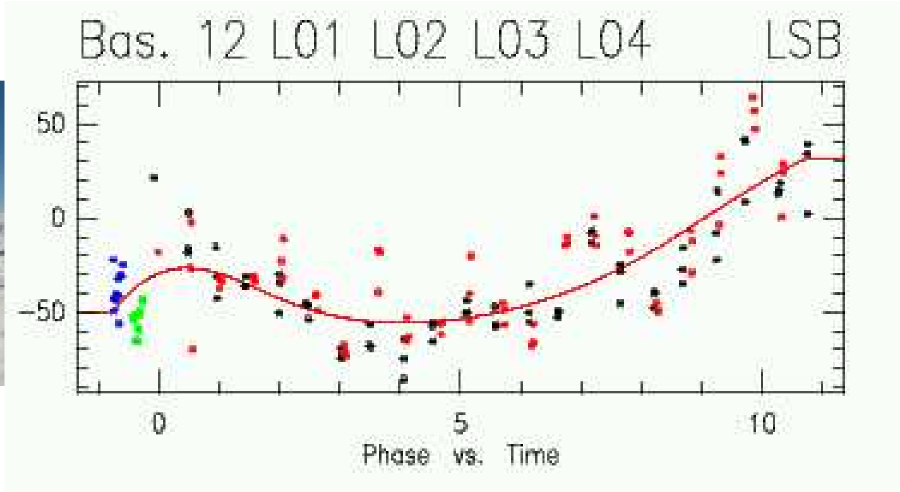

Data Calibration

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6th IRAM Millimeter Interferometry School
Grenoble, 6—10 October 2008

Institut de Radioastronomie Millimétrique

Data calibration
Outline

• **Introduction**	
• **The atmosphere**	our best enemy
• **Formalism**	deriving antenna gains
• **Bandpass**	phase and amplitude vs freq
• **Phase**	phase vs time
• **Amplitude**	amplitude vs time
• **Flux**	absolute flux scale

Introduction
Measurements

- At any time t, the interferometer provides:
  - **V(nu,t)** = spectrum
  - **V(t)** = continuum data = spectrum average
- nothing to be calibrated depends on (u,v) → consider time dependence
- Need **calibrations** of all sorts because
  - electronics have variable gains (both amp. and phase, both frequency and time)
  - atmosphere absorption and path length fluctuations

Introduction
Telescope calibration

- Pointing
- Focus
- IF filters band pass

Real-time calibrations

- Atmospheric calibration
- Antenna positions
- Delay

New values can be entered off-line if necessary

- Atmospheric phase correction

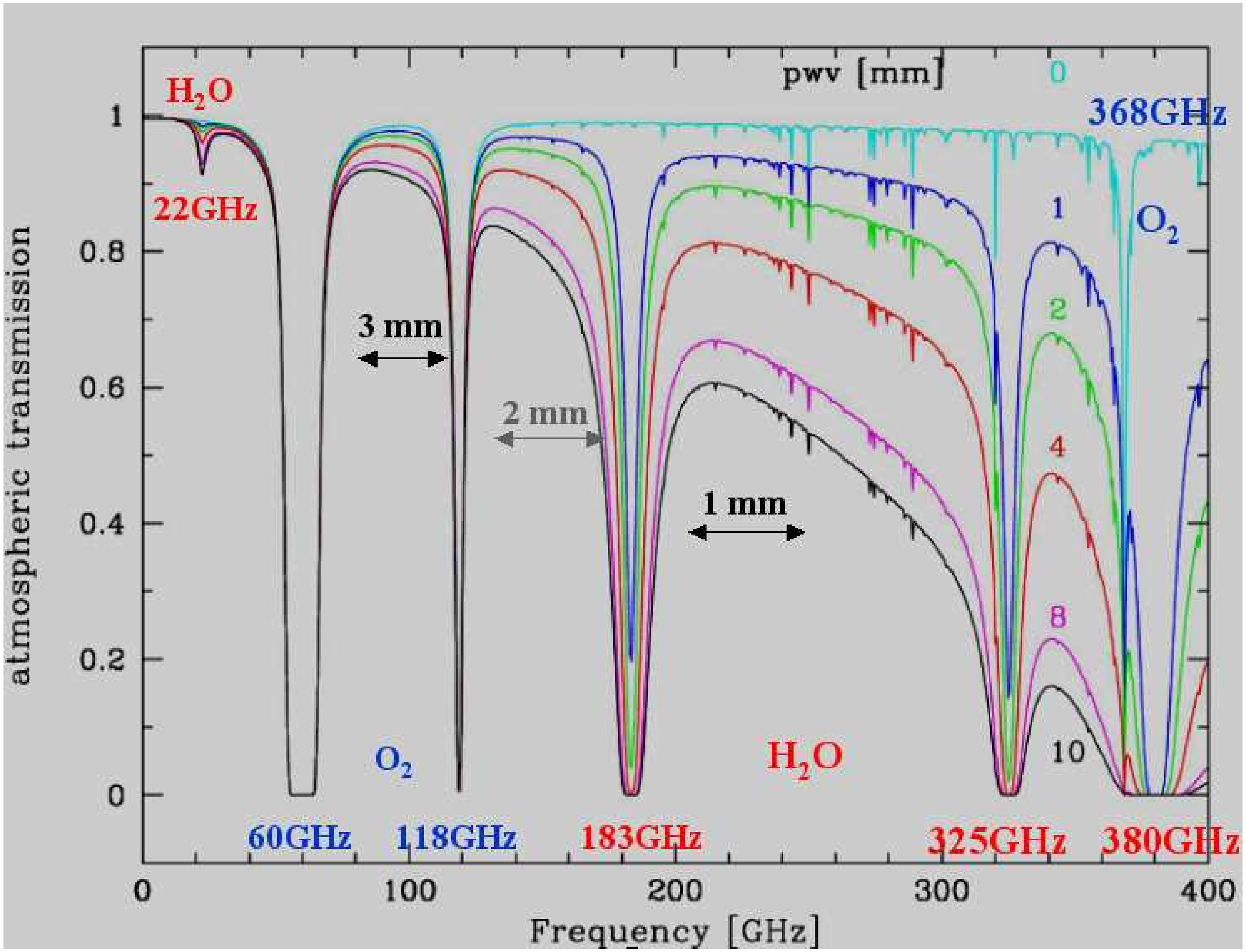
Uncorrected data are also stored

The atmosphere
Our best enemy

- Thermal emission → **noise**
- **Absorption of incoming signal** → attenuation
- Time- and position- dependent **phase error**
  - → Amplitude decorrelation
  - → Radio “seeing”

- Amount of **water vapor is highly variable** in time
  - Need real-time calibration of signal attenuation
  - Need real-time calibration of phase fluctuations

The atmosphere
Absorption



The atmosphere
Absorption calibration

- Goals
  1. Correct for atmospheric absorption
  2. Backend counts → Temperature (Kelvin)

- At mm wavelengths, this **must be done very often** (20 min) because
  - Receiver gain drift
  - Atmosphere fluctuations

The atmosphere
Absorption calibration

- Assume linear answer of receiving system

$$\text{Counts} = \alpha\,(Te^{-\tau} + \mathbf{Tsys})$$

- Observe sky, cold (4K), and warm (273 K) loads
- Compute:
  - System temperature **Tsys**
  - Receiver gain α
  - Atmosphere opacity τ (**using atm. model**)

The atmosphere
Phase correction

- Timescale of phase fluctuations: seconds to hours
- Need **real-time correction** of fluctuations during basic integration time (< 1 min), to avoid
  - loss of amplitude = decorrelation by $\exp(-\sigma^2/2)$
  - “seeing” (phase $\leftrightarrow$ position)
- This is conceptually similar to piston correction in **adaptative optics** in optical/IR domain

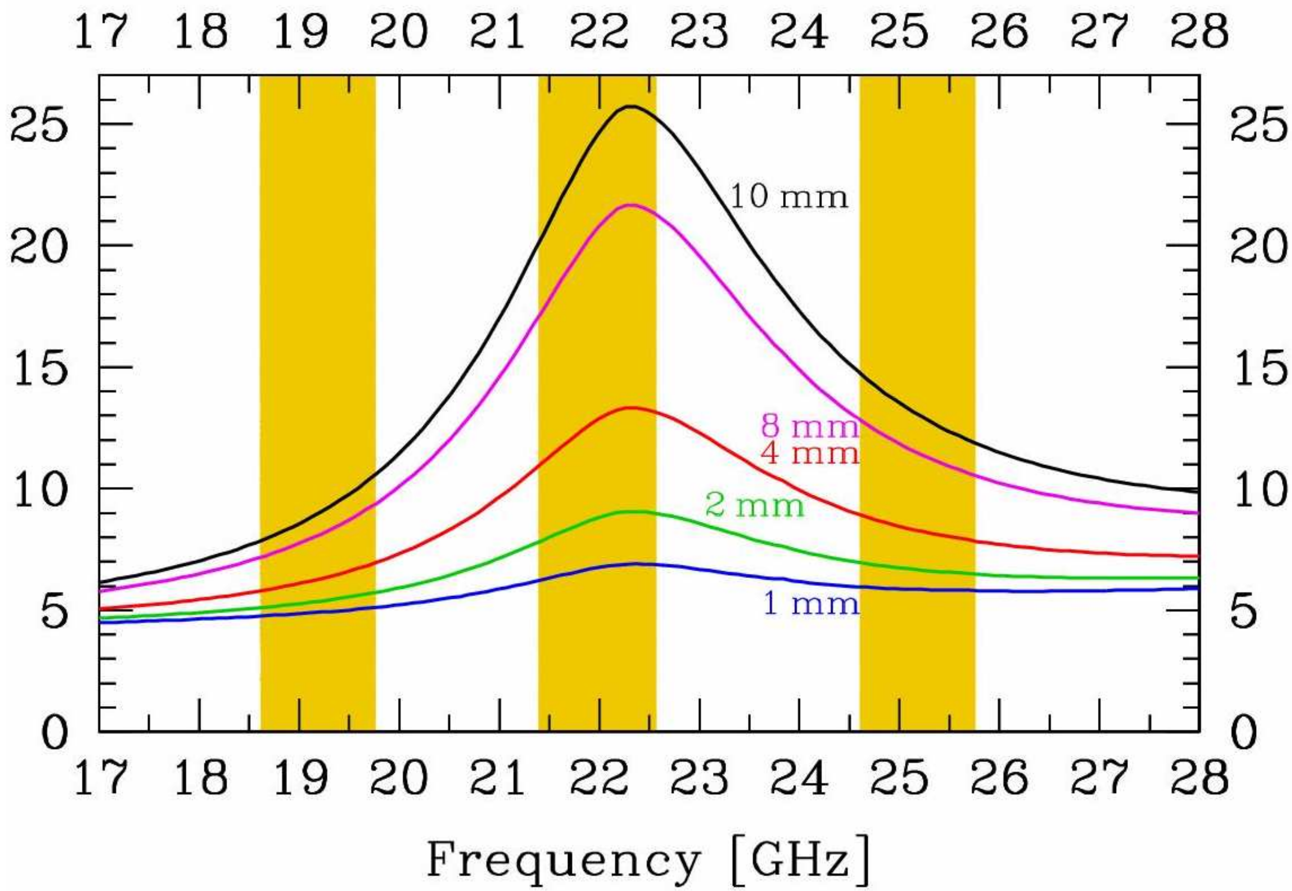
The atmosphere
Phase correction

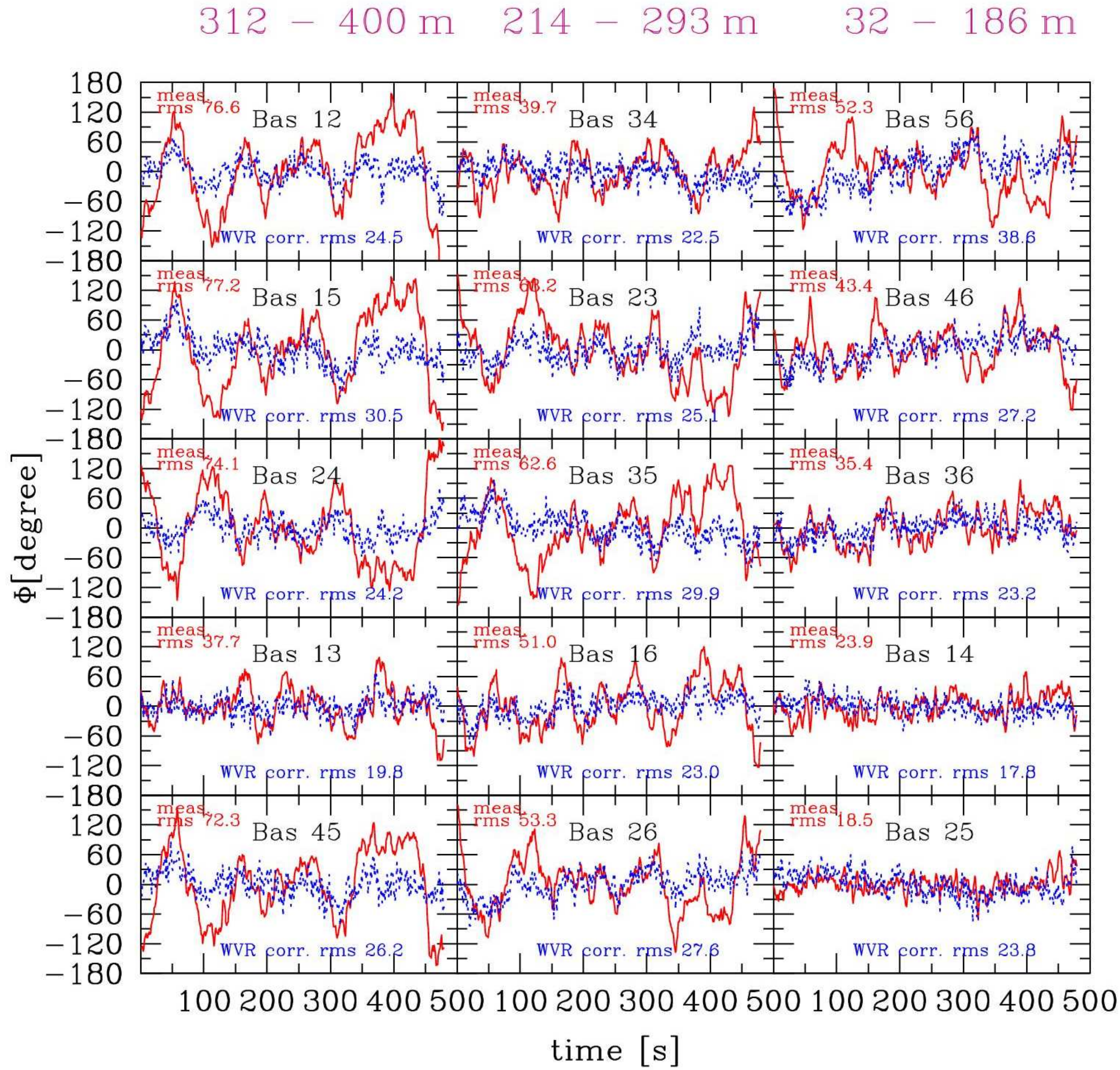
- Predict amount of water from **water line at 22 GHz (PdBI) or 183 GHz (ALMA)** using dedicated receivers (Water Vapor Radiometers = WVR)

- Measurement → Atmospheric **model** → Water vapor content → Path delay → Atmospheric phase → Real-time correction

- Done **every second** at IRAM PdBI
- Keep both corrected and not corrected data

The atmosphere
WVR at 22 GHz




312 – 400 m
214 – 293 m
32 – 186 m
Φ[degree]
time [s]
Bas 12
meas. rms 76.6
WVR corr. rms 24.5
Bas 34
meas. rms 39.7
WVR corr. rms 22.5
Bas 56
meas. rms 52.3
WVR corr. rms 38.6
Bas 15
meas. rms 77.2
WVR corr. rms 30.5
Bas 23
meas. rms 68.2
WVR corr. rms 25.1
Bas 46
meas. rms 43.4
WVR corr. rms 27.2
Bas 24
meas. rms 74.1
WVR corr. rms 24.2
Bas 35
meas. rms 62.6
WVR corr. rms 29.9
Bas 36
meas. rms 35.4
WVR corr. rms 23.2
Bas 13
meas. rms 37.7
WVR corr. rms 19.8
Bas 16
meas. rms 51.0
WVR corr. rms 23.0
Bas 14
meas. rms 23.9
WVR corr. rms 17.8
Bas 45
meas. rms 72.3
WVR corr. rms 26.2
Bas 26
meas. rms 53.3
WVR corr. rms 27.6
Bas 25
meas. rms 18.5
WVR corr. rms 23.8

The atmosphere
Phase correction

- Limitations:
  - WVR stability and sensitivity
  - Uncertainties in the conversion factor

- **Cannot (yet) track the phase between sources**
- Only used for on-source phase fluctuations during **~minutes**
- Main effect = **remove the amplitude decorrelation**

Formalism
Visibilities

- Calibrate only temporal or frequency effects, no dependence on (u,v)
- True visibility: $\mathbf{V_{ij}(\nu,t)}$ (baseline ij)
- Observed visibility:

$$\mathbf{Vobs_{ij}(\nu,t) = G_{ij}(\nu,t)\, V_{ij}(\nu,t) + noise}$$

- $\mathbf{G_{ij}}$ = complex gain (amplitude & phase)
- Scalar description – no polarization

Formalism
Gain decomposition

- **Most of the effects are antenna-based**
  - Pointing, Focus, Antenna position, Atmosphere, Receivers noise, Receivers bandpass…
- **Gain decomposition:** $Vobs_{ij} = G_{ij} V_{ij} = g_i\, g_j\, V_{ij}$
- Baseline-based effect?
  - Correlator bandpass → calibrated on-line
  - Time and frequency averaging → **decorrelation**

Formalism
Antenna-based gains

- Observation of a **point source** of flux S:

$$Vobs = G_{ij}\, V \qquad V = S \qquad G_{ij} = Vobs/S$$

- Antenna –based gains: $g_i g_j = Vobs/S$

- N complex unknown (one g_i per antenna)
- N(N-1)/2 equations (one per baseline)
- **System is over-determined** and may be solved by a method of **least squares**

Formalism
Gain decomposition

Advantages of using the antenna-based gains:

1. most of the effects are **truly antenna-based**
   example: pointing, focus, …

2. precision to which antenna gains are determined is **improved by a factor √N** over the precision of the measurement of baseline gains

Formalism
Time/Frequency

- **Basic assumption: time- and frequency-variations are decoupled**
- Quite robust:
  - Frequency response mostly due to receivers; stable until retuning
  - Time variations (atmosphere, antennas, ...) mostly achromatic

Data calibration
Steps

<u>Millimeter interferometers</u>

- **Bandpass** (amplitude and phase vs. frequency)
- **Phase** vs. time
- **Flux** scale
- **Amplitude** vs. time

Bandpass calibration
The problems

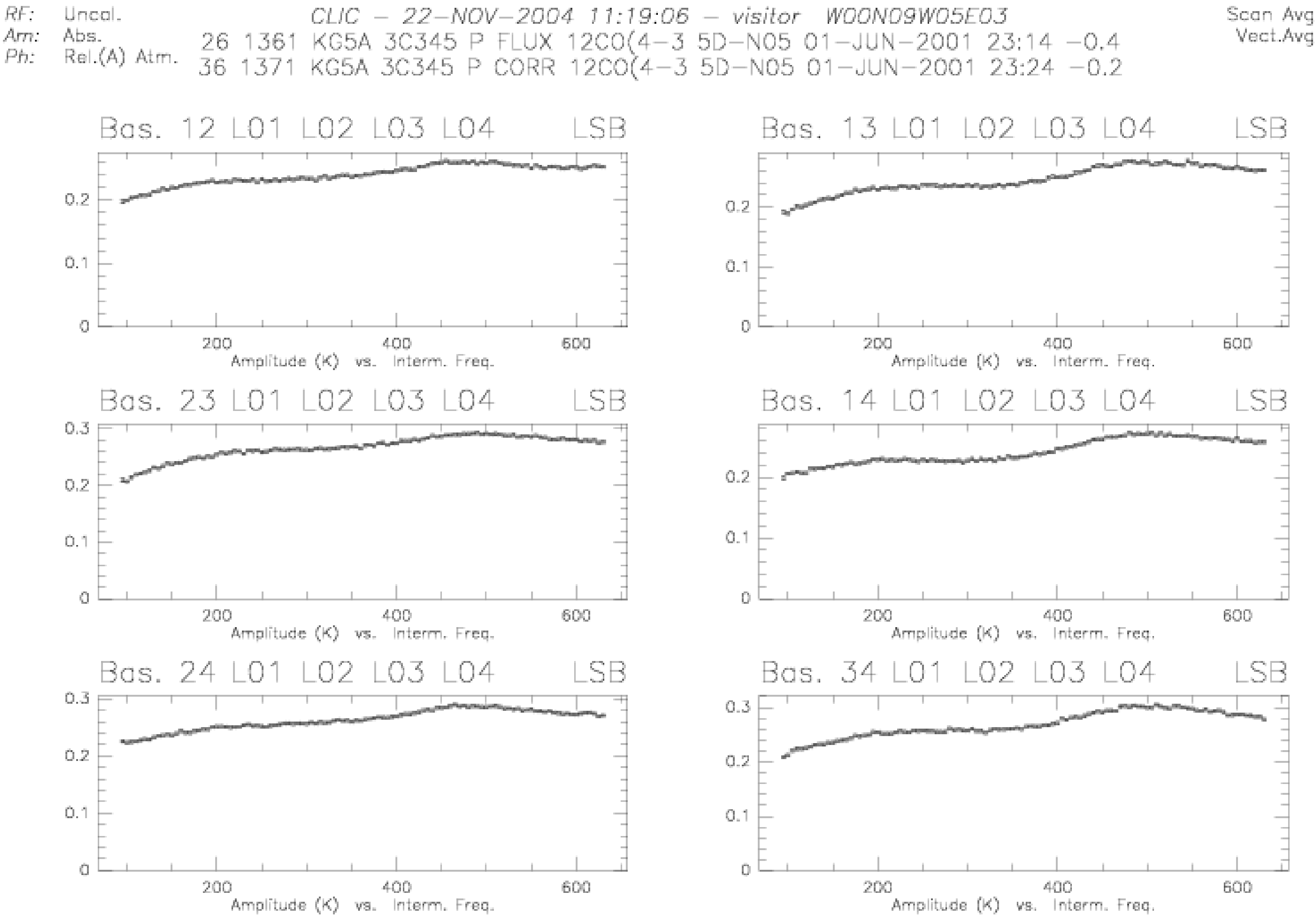
- Frequency dependence of the interferometer response arises from:
  - <u>Receivers intrinsic response</u>
  - Delay offsets (slope on phase)
  - Coaxial cables attenuation
  - Antenna chromatism
  - Atmosphere (O2, O3 lines)
  - …

Bandpass calibration
Method

- A strong quasar is observed at the beginning of each project

- **Phase should be zero** (point source)
  Amplitude vs. frequency should be constant (continuum source)

- Potential problem: spectral index of quasars over large bandwidth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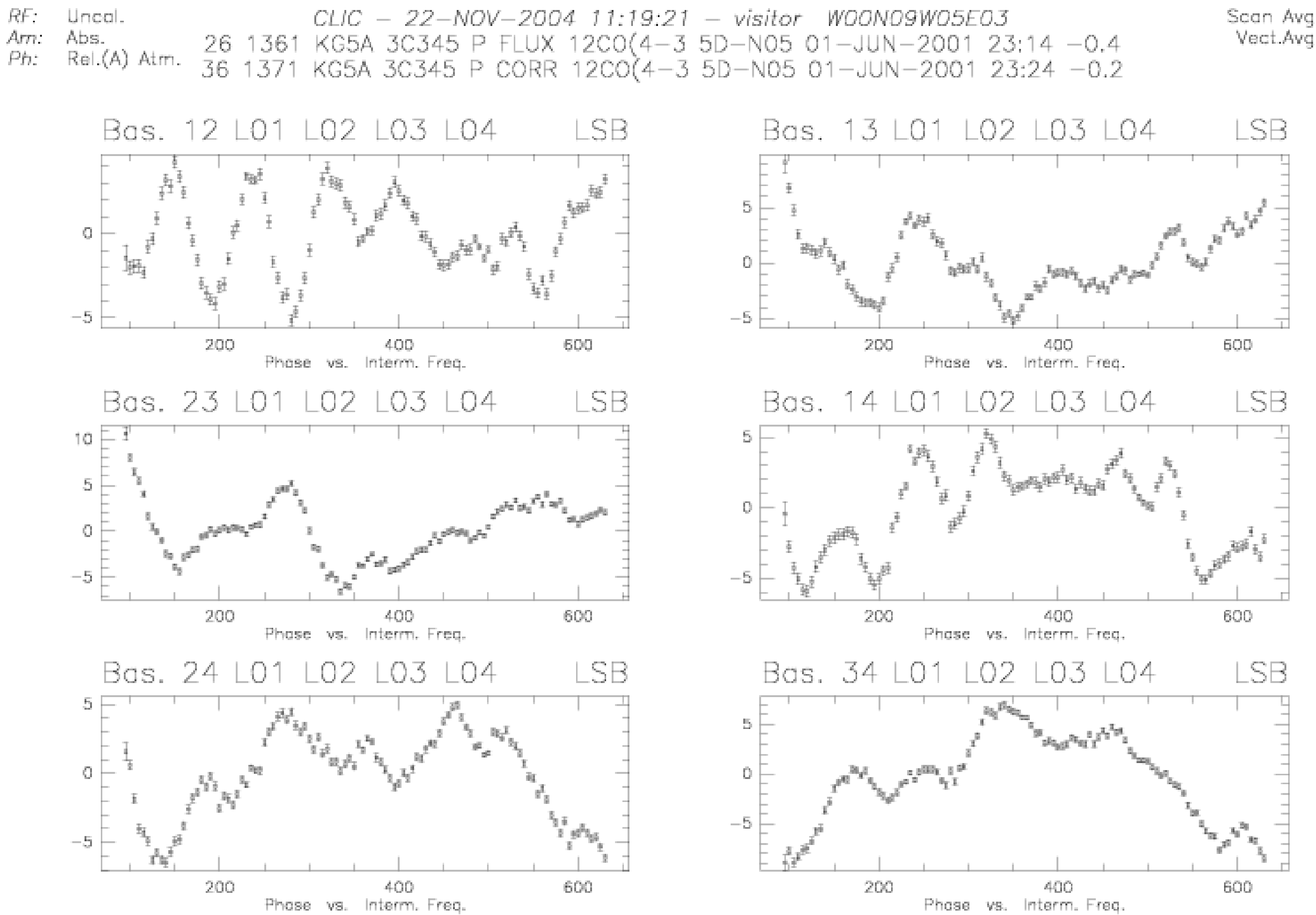
Am: Abs.
Ph: Rel.(A) Atm.
CLIC – 22-NOV-2004 11:19:06 – visitor W00N09W05E03
26 1361 KG5A 3C345 P FLUX 12CO(4-3 5D-N05 01-JUN-2001 23:14 -0.4
36 1371 KG5A 3C345 P CORR 12CO(4-3 5D-N05 01-JUN-2001 23:24 -0.2
Scan Avg.
Vect.Avg.
Bas. 12 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 13 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 23 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 14 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 24 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 34 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Amplitude (K) vs. Interm. Freq.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36 1371 KG5A 3C345 P CORR 12CO(4-3 5D-N05 01-JUN-2001 23:24 -0.2
Scan Avg.
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Bas. 12 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
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Bas. 23 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 14 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 24 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 34 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Phase vs. Interm. Freq.

Bandpass calibration
Method

- Time average (improve the SNR)
- **Solve for antenna-based gains**
- **Fit as a function of frequency** (polynom)
- NB: gains defined such that integral = 1
- Apply the bandpass to all data

- Assume bandpass is constant with time
- Must be recalibrated if receivers is retuned

Bandpass calibration
Accuracy

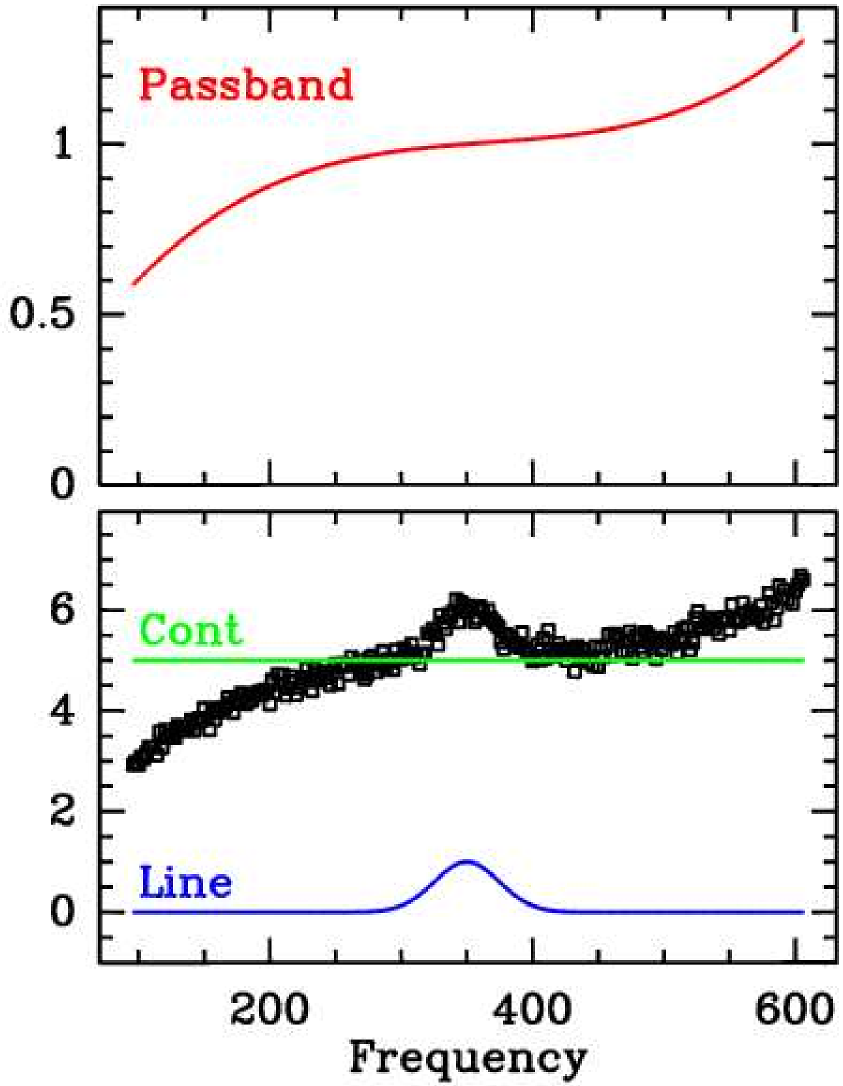
- RF bandpass phase accuracy → uncertainty on relative positions of spectral features

- Rule of thumb:

Position error / Beam = $\Delta\Phi$ / 360

- **1" resolution observations, $\Delta\Phi$ = 5 deg, error = 0.015"**

Bandpass calibration
Accuracy



- RF bandpass <u>amplitude</u> accuracy → may be important to detect **weak line on a strong continuum**

- Bandpass curve is a multiplicative factor

Phase calibration
The problems

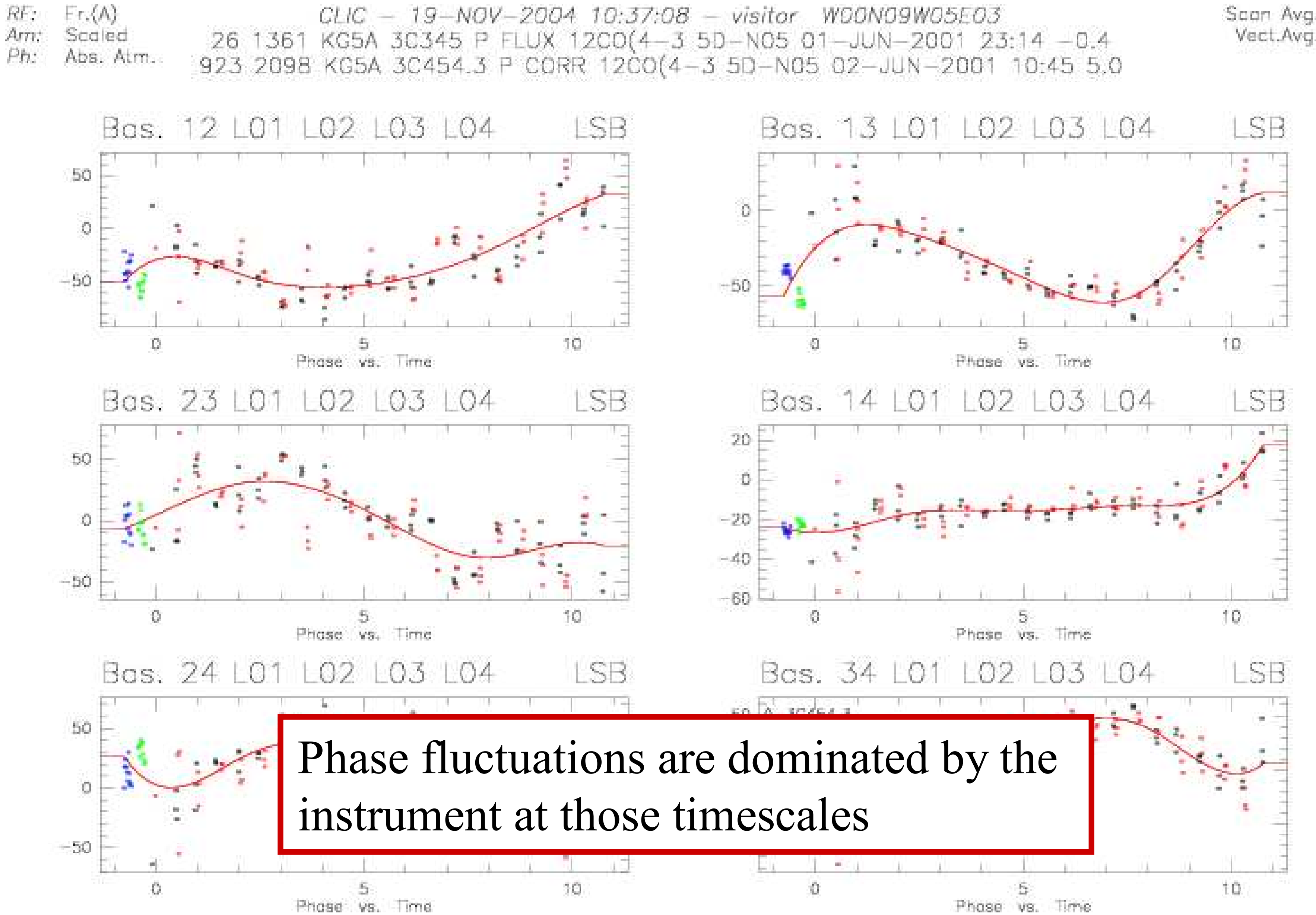
- **Short-term time variation** of the phase is caused by the atmosphere

- **Long-term** time variation:
  - Antenna position errors (period 24 h)
  - Atmosphere up to ~1h
  - Antenna/electronics drifts

Phase calibration is critical for the final image quality

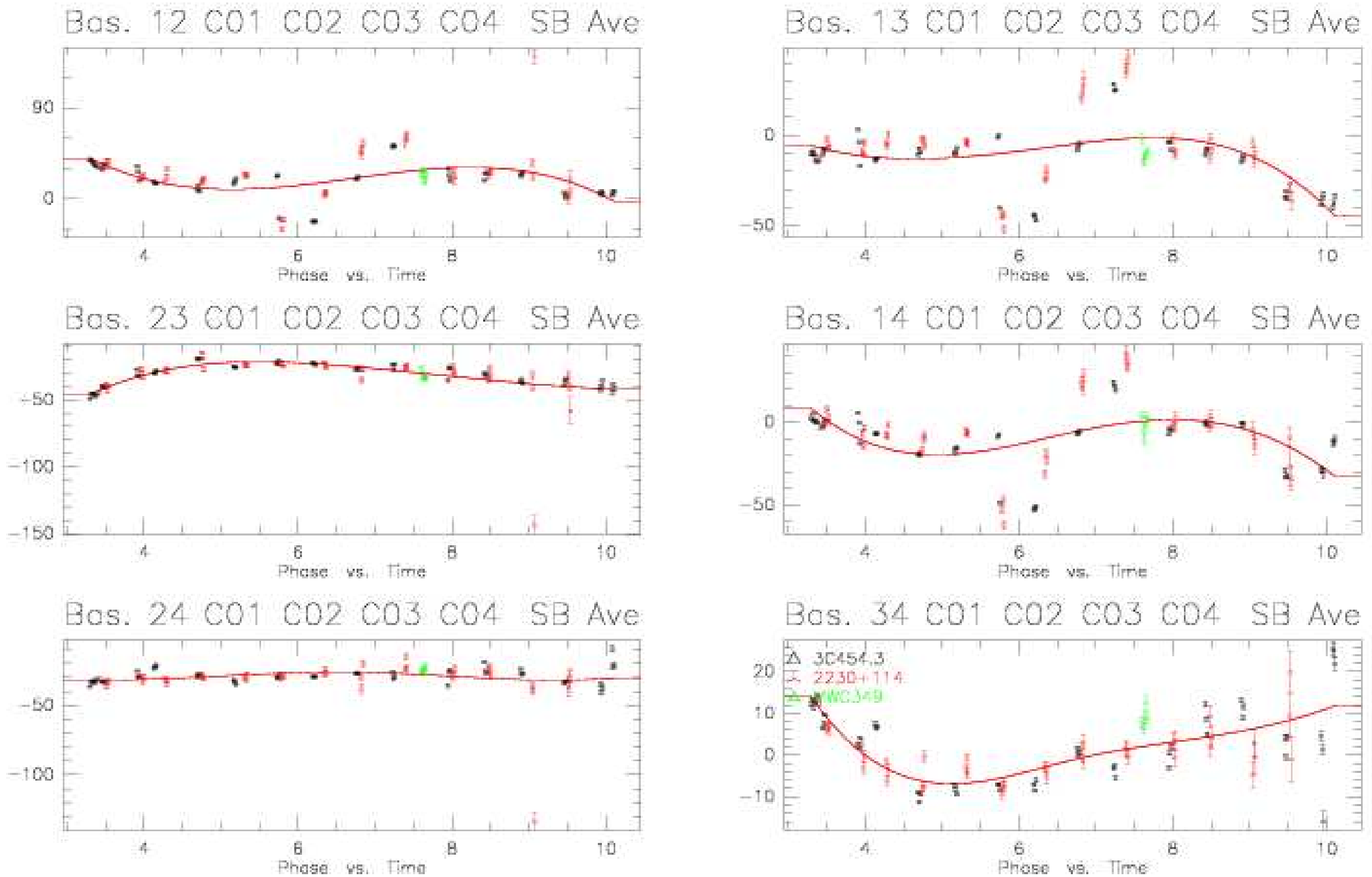
Phase calibration
Method

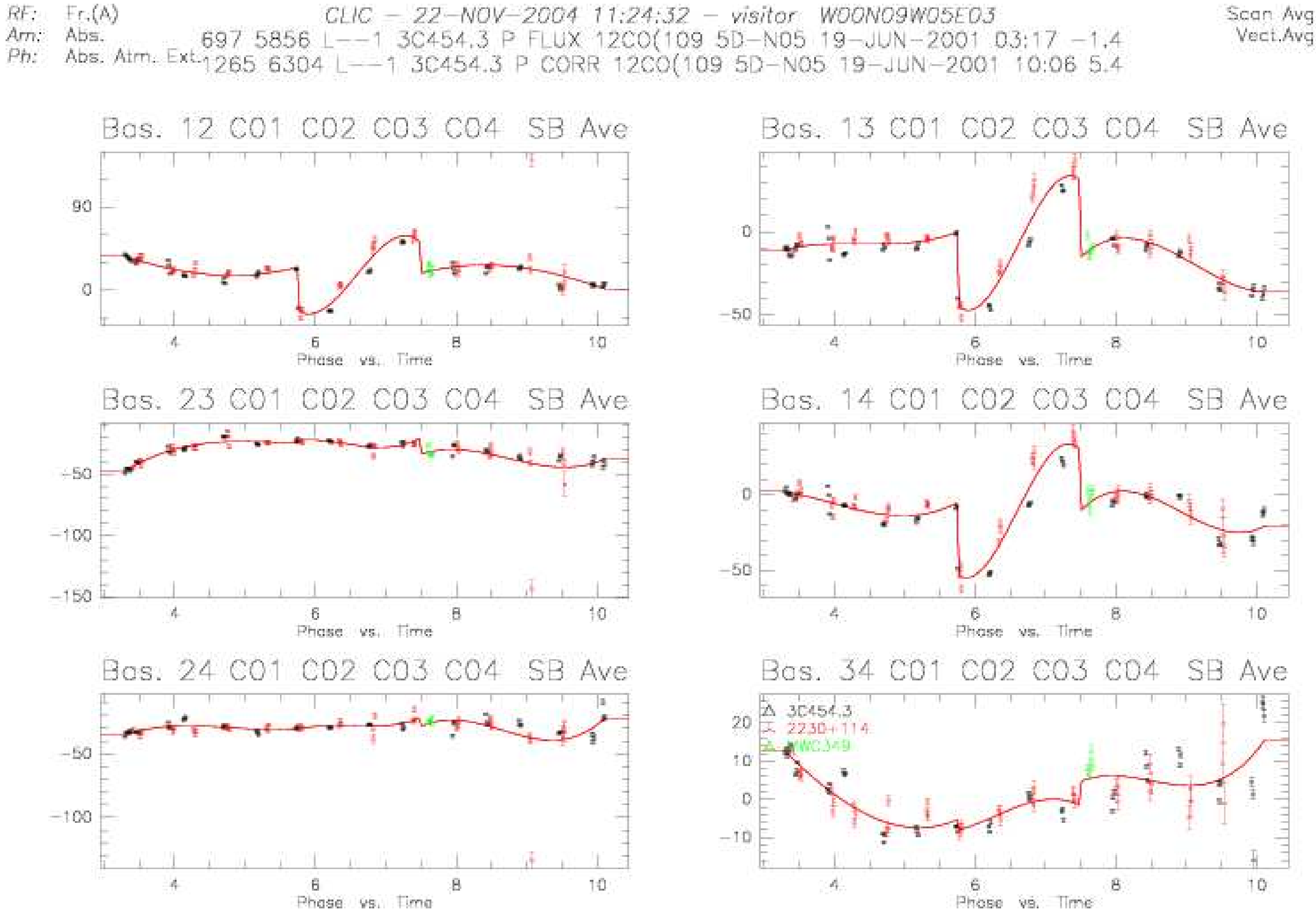
- Calibration
  - A point source (quasar) is observed every ~20min
  - **Its phase must be zero**
  - **Solve for antenna-based gains**
  - **Fit as a function of time** (spline)
  - Better: use two calibrators
  - Apply to all data
  - Plot per baseline: measurements + combination of antenna-based fits



Phase fluctuations are dominated by the instrument at those timescales

RF: Fr.(A) CLIC − 22−NOV−2004 11:24:13 − visitor W00N09W05E03 Scan Avg.
Am: Abs. 697 5856 L−−1 3C454.3 P FLUX 12CO(109 5D−N05 19−JUN−2001 03:17 −1.4 Vect.Avg.
Ph: Abs. Atm. Ext. 1265 6304 L−−1 3C454.3 P CORR 12CO(109 5D−N05 19−JUN−2001 10:06 5.4




RF: Fr.(A)
Am: Abs.
Ph: Abs. Atm. Ext.
CLIC − 22−NOV−2004 11:24:32 − visitor W00N09W05E03
697 5856 L−−1 3C454.3 P FLUX 12CO(109 5D−N05 19−JUN−2001 03:17 −1.4
1265 6304 L−−1 3C454.3 P CORR 12CO(109 5D−N05 19−JUN−2001 10:06 5.4
Scan Avg.
Vect.Avg.
Bas. 12 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Bas. 13 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Bas. 23 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Bas. 14 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Bas. 24 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Bas. 34 C01 C02 C03 C04 SB Ave
Phase vs. Time
3C454.3
2230+114
MWC349

Phase calibration
Strategies

Phase calibration strategies:

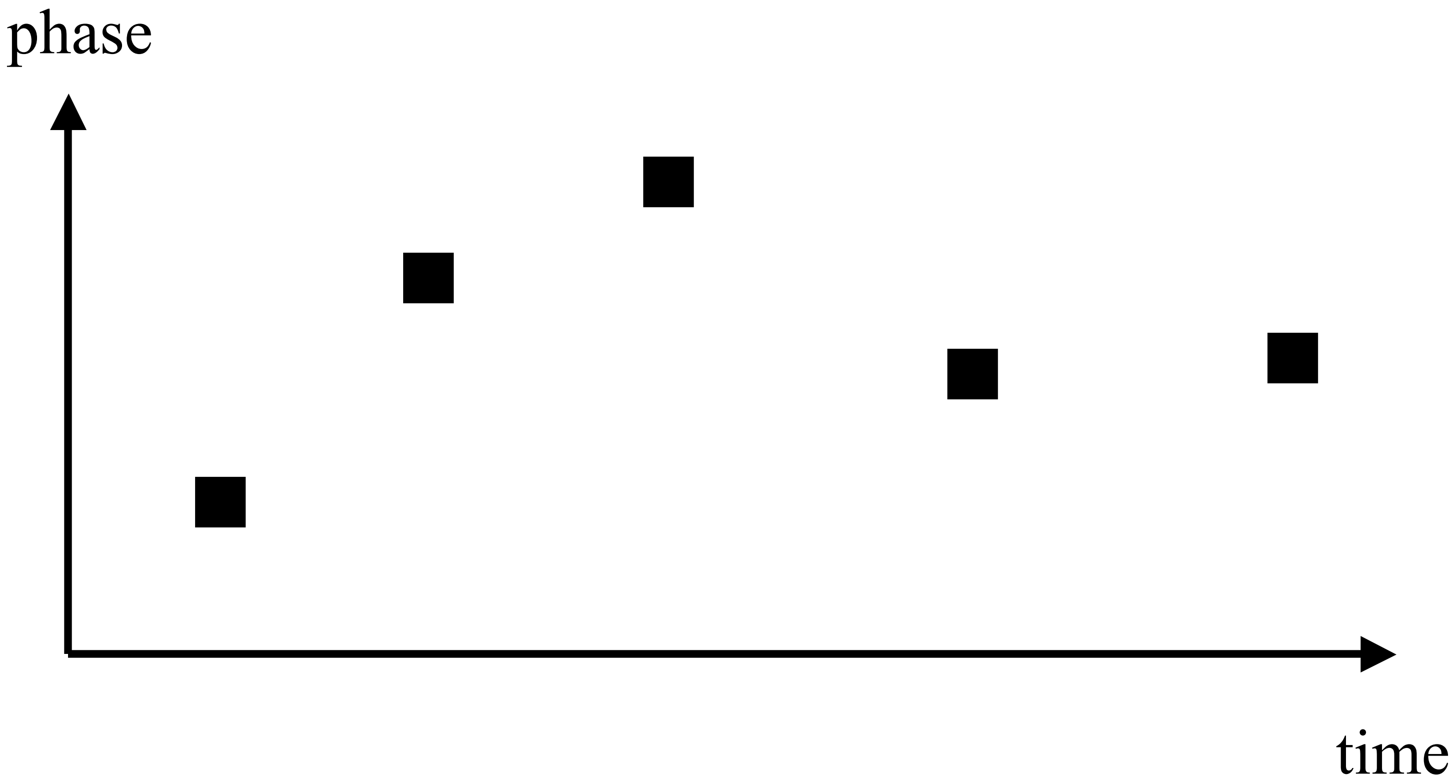
Fits

1. fit per baseline
2. compute antenna gains + fit per antenna

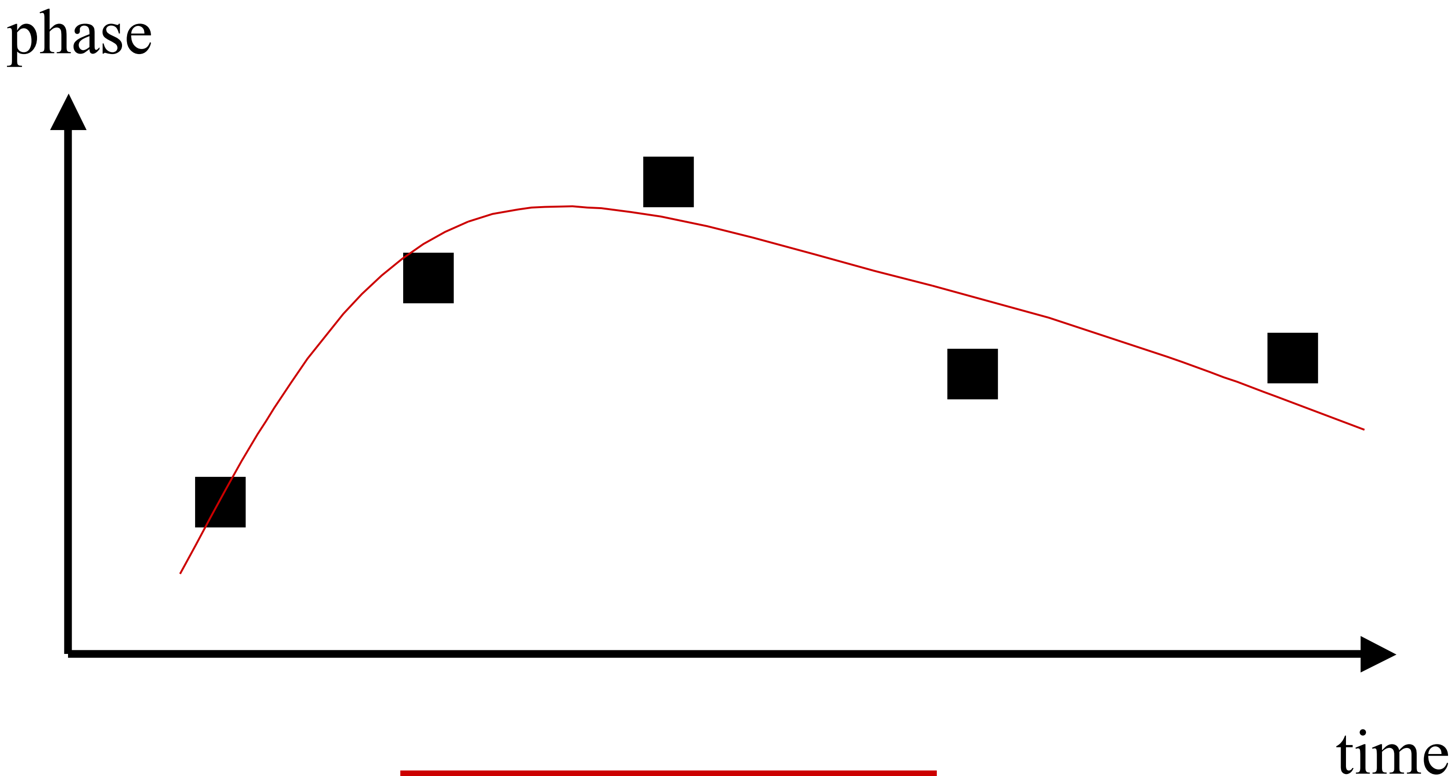
Points

1. use each point as calibration value + linear interpolation between
2. compute antenna gains + use each point as calibrator value + fit per antenna

Phase calibration
Strategies

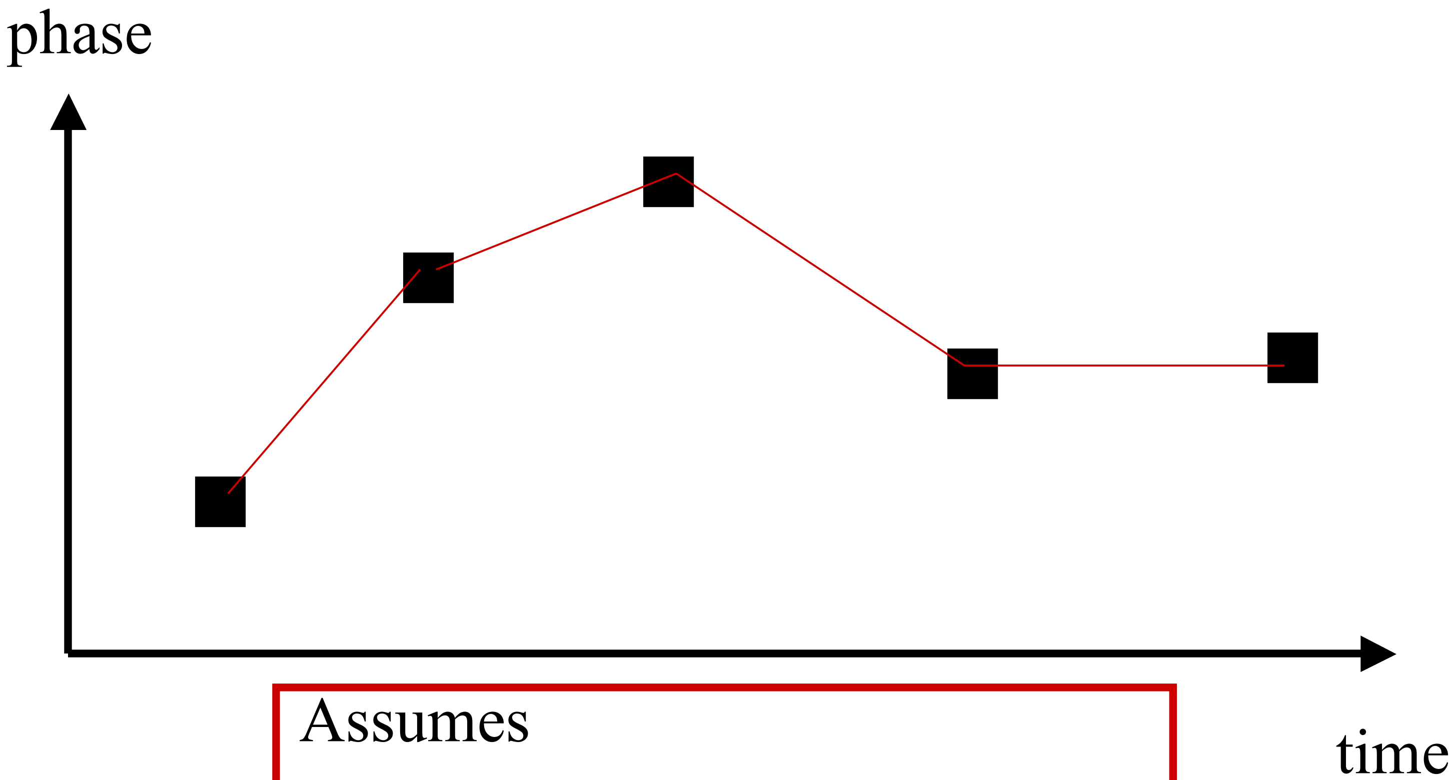


Phase calibration
Strategies



Default for PdBI

Phase calibration
Strategies

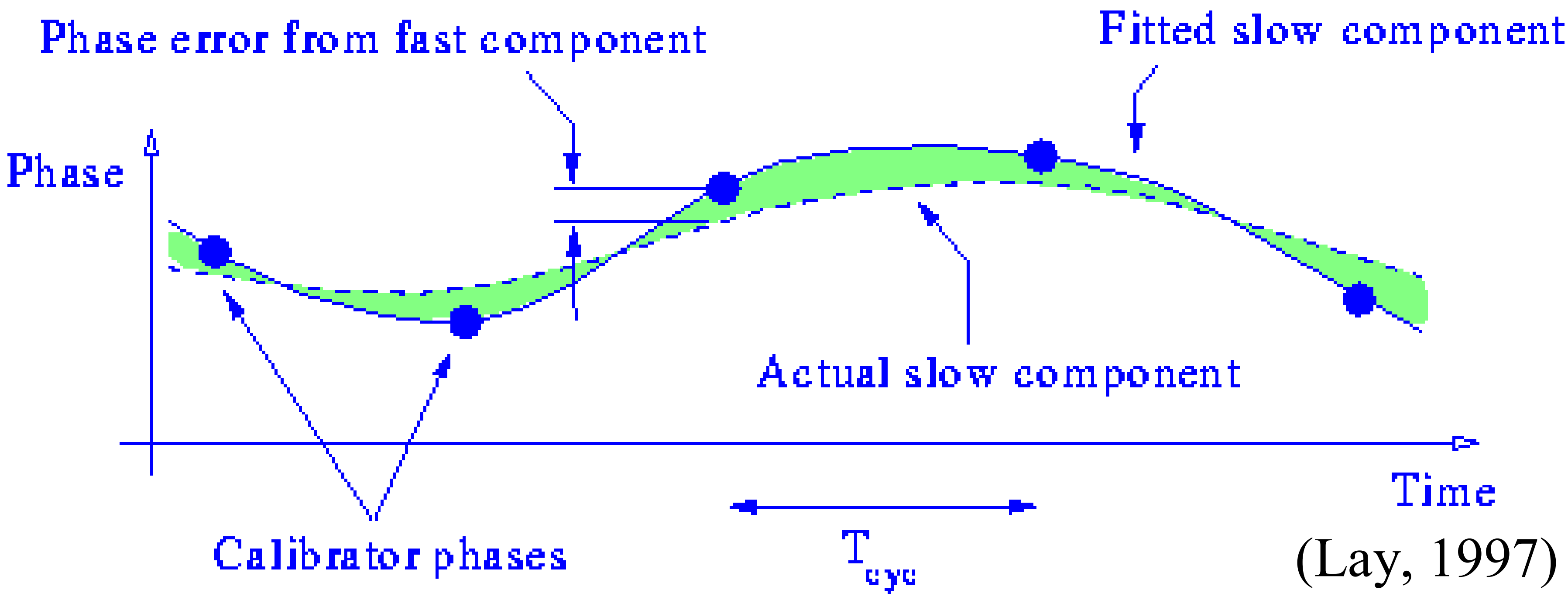


Assumes

- excellent SNR for each point

- no atmospheric phase

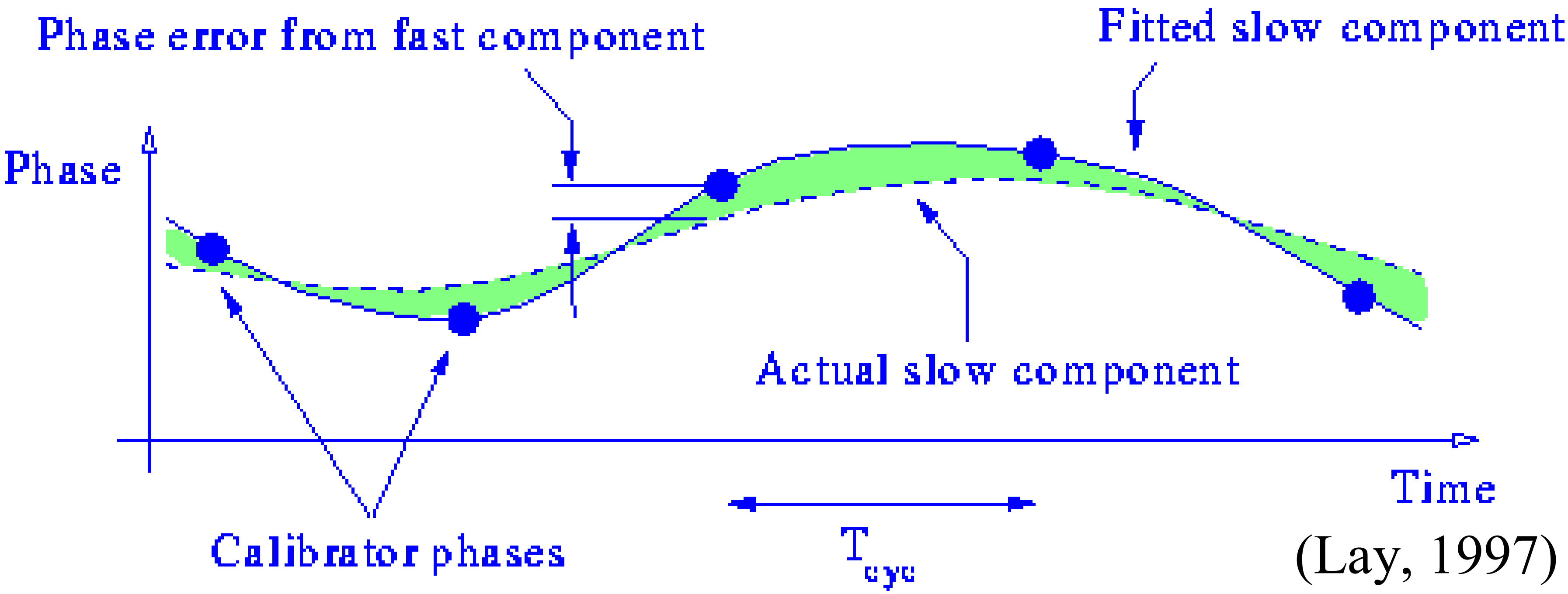
Phase calibration
Strategies



(Lay, 1997)

Phase is sampled at intervals Tc → fit is sensitive to errors due to the presence of the fast component (<2Tc), which can be large

Phase calibration
Strategies



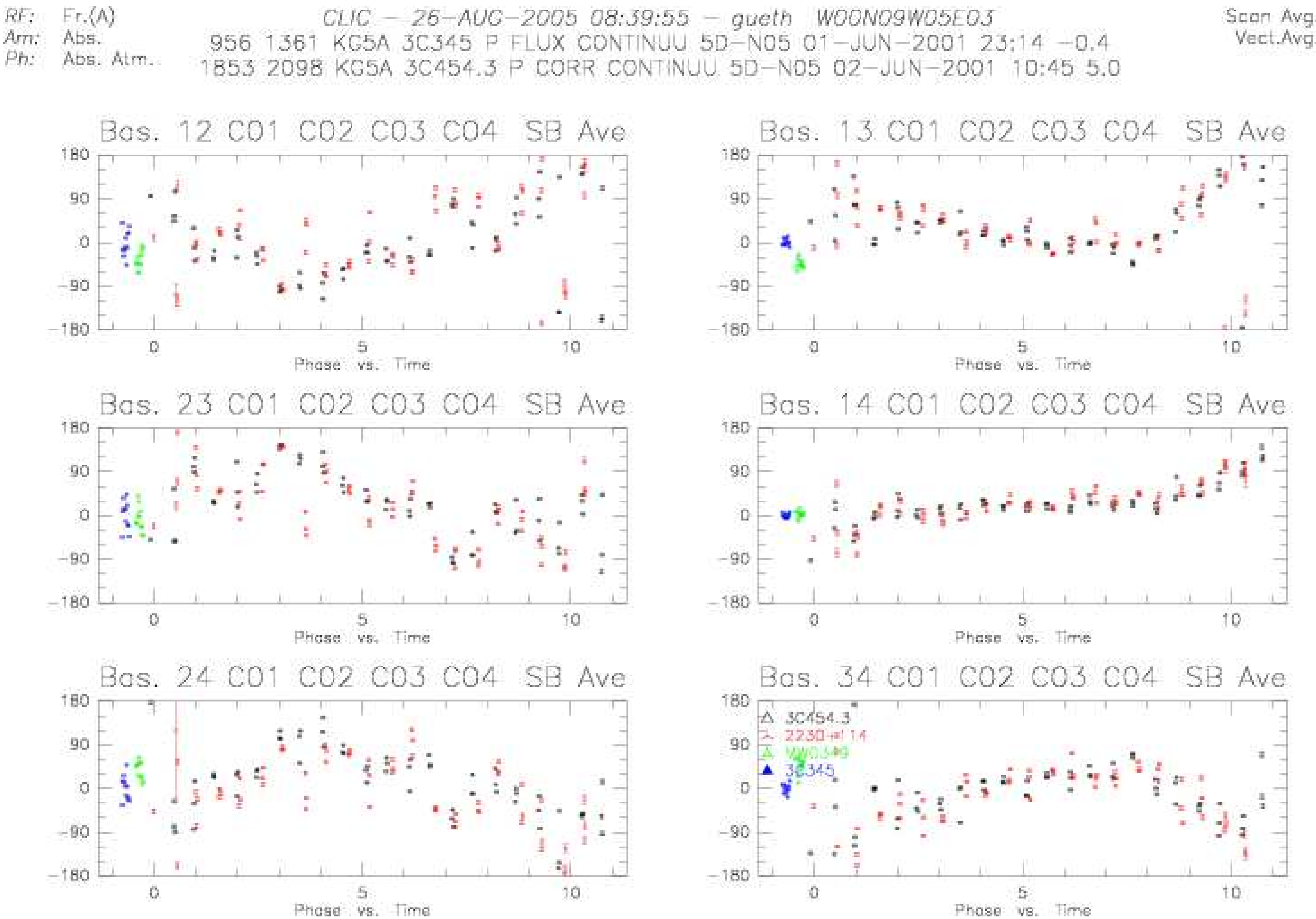
(Lay, 1997)

It is actually recommended to fit a curve that does **not** go through all points

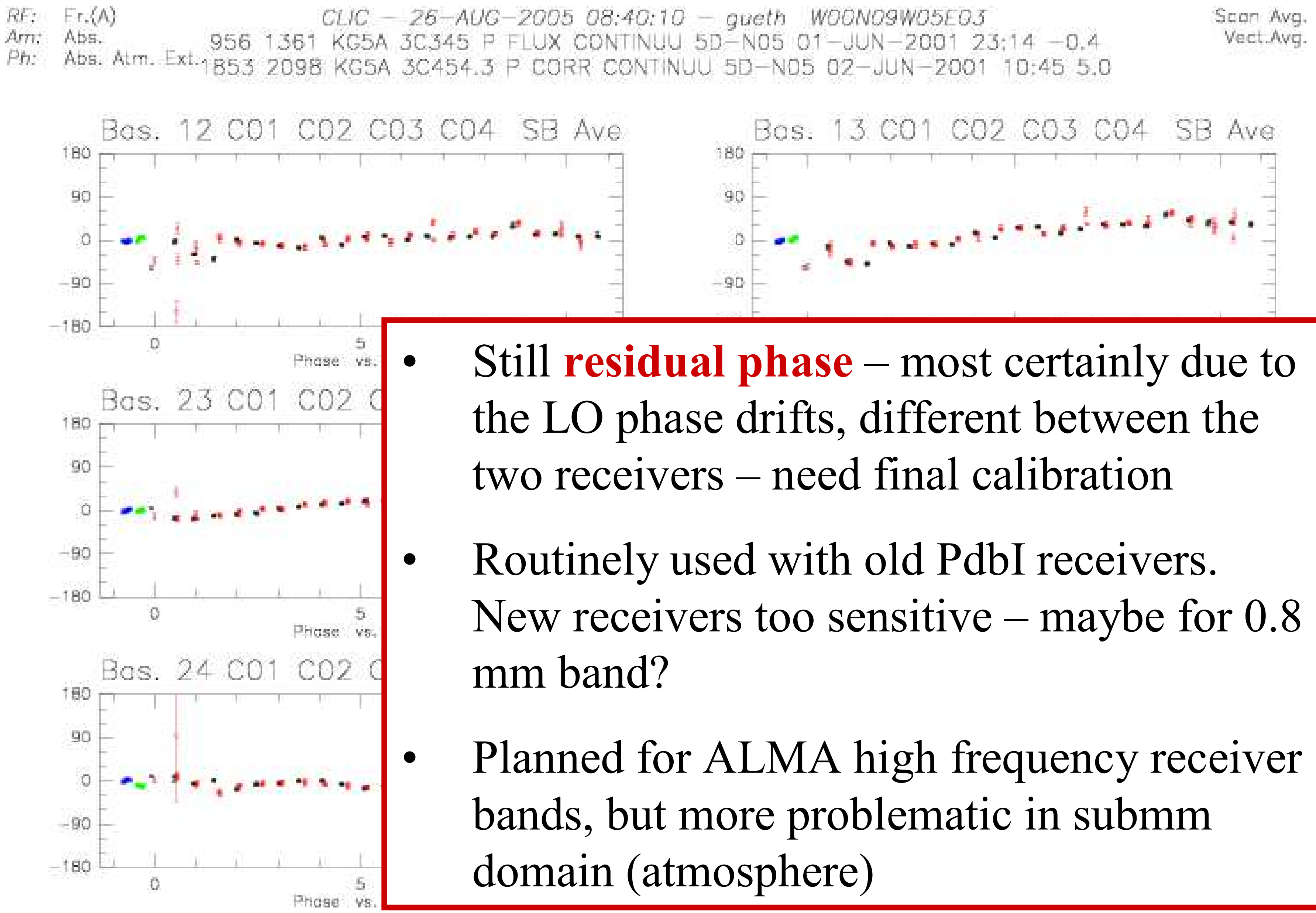
Phase calibration
Phase transfer

- Atmosphere and most of the instrumental fluctuations **scale with frequency**
- **Phase transfer:**
  1. **use low-frequency data (highest SNR) to derive phase curve**
  2. **scale according to frequency ratio**
  3. **correct the high frequency data**

230 GHz data, no phase transfer



230 GHz, with phase transfer



- Still **residual phase** – most certainly due to the LO phase drifts, different between the two receivers – need final calibration
- Routinely used with old PdbI receivers. New receivers too sensitive – maybe for 0.8 mm band?
- Planned for ALMA high frequency receiver bands, but more problematic in submm domain (atmosphere)

Phase calibration
Radio seeing

- Phase fluctuations timescales:

< 1 minute	real-time atmospheric phase correction
1 min – 1h	→ **not corrected**
>1 h	off-line phase calibration

- Can be estimated by rms of phase calibration fit
- Translate into a **radio seeing** ~ phase rms / baseline
- Typically 0.2″—1″

Phase calibration
Fast switching

- **Reduce the switching time** calibrator-source down to 10 seconds
- Advantages: Remove a larger part of the atmospheric fluctuations spectrum. Perfect complement to the WVR corrections (second timescale)
- Drawbacks: Observing efficiency is decreased. Puts very strong constrains on the antennas and acquisition system.
- Planned for ALMA

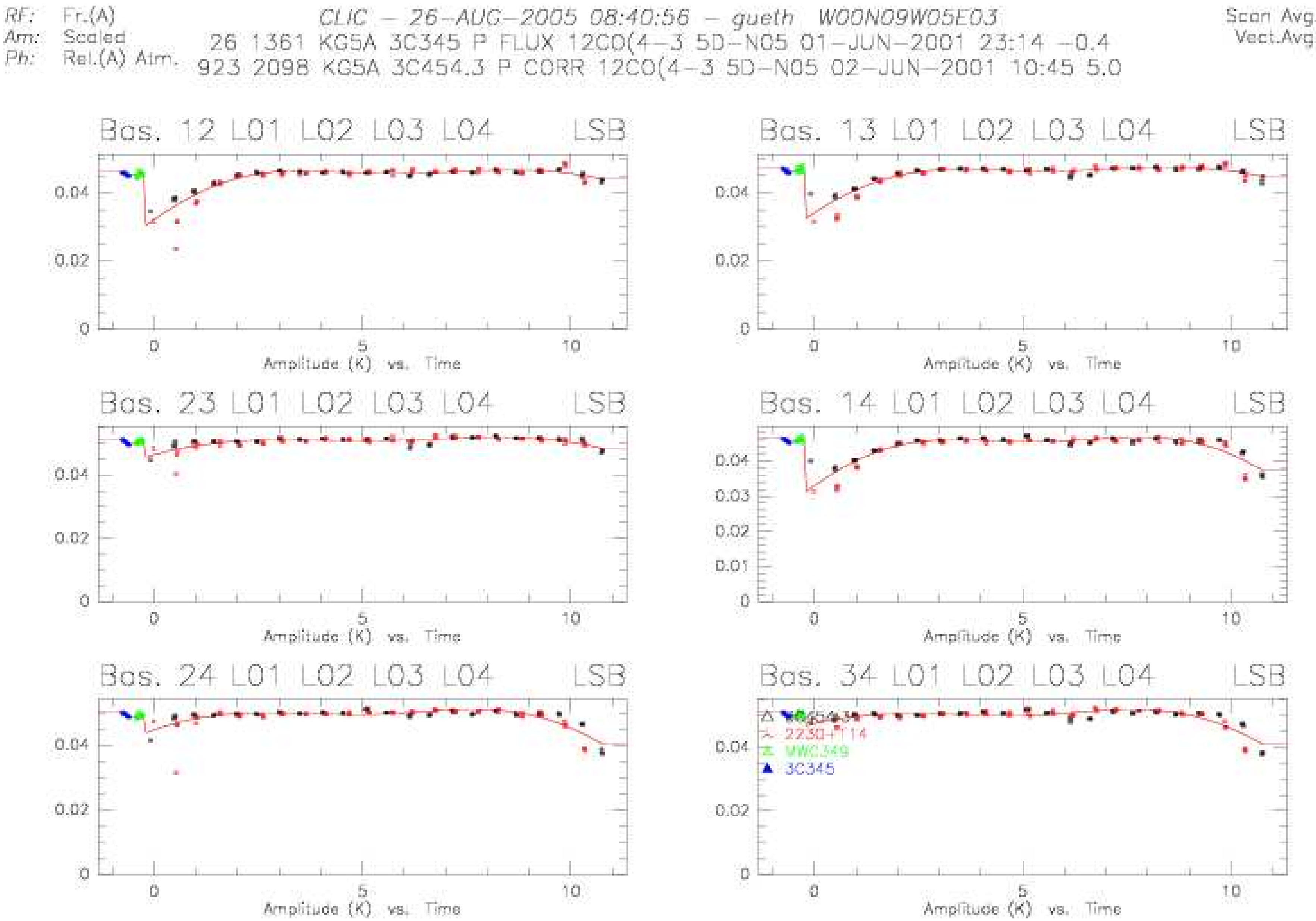
Phase calibration
Auto-calibration

- Simple case where the field **contains a strong point source**
- Can be used to calibrate out almost all phase fluctuations at periods > integration time (30 sec)
- Excellent results but for **very specific projects**
  - Absorption lines in quasars
  - Stars with strong maser lines

Amplitude calibration
The problems

- Temperature (K) → Flux (Jansky)
  - Scaling by **antenna efficiency** (Jy/K)
  - **Not enough for mm-interferometers** because
    - Amplitude loss due to decorrelation
    - Variation of the antenna gain (pointing, focus)

- Need **amplitude referencing to a point source** (quasar) to calibrate out the temporal variation of the antenna efficiency – just like phase calibration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Am: Scaled
Ph: Rel.(A) Atm.
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923 2098 KG5A 3C454.3 P CORR 12CO(4-3 5D-N05 02-JUN-2001 10:45 5.0
Scan Avg.
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Bas. 12 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
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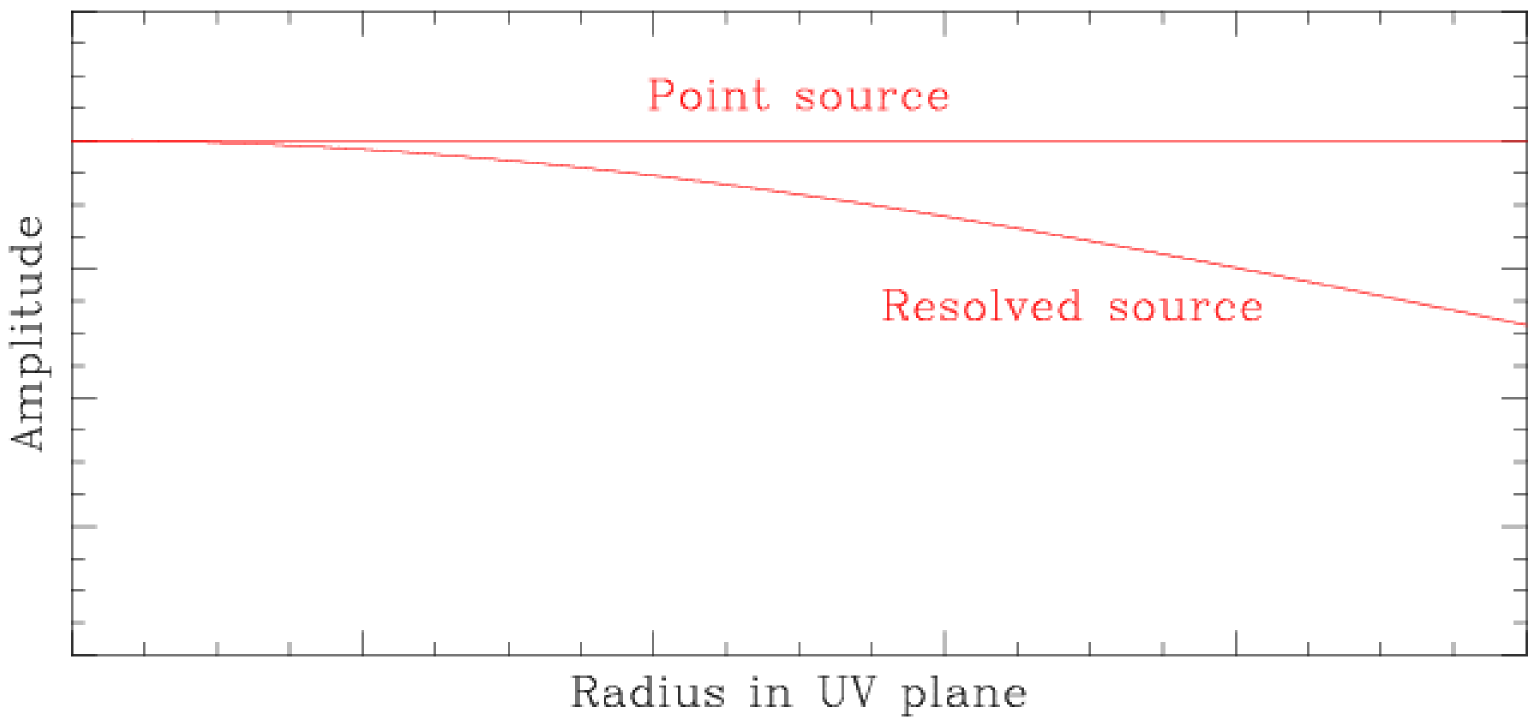
Bas. 23 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 14 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 24 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Bas. 34 L01 L02 L03 L04 LSB
Amplitude (K) vs. Time
2230+114
3C345

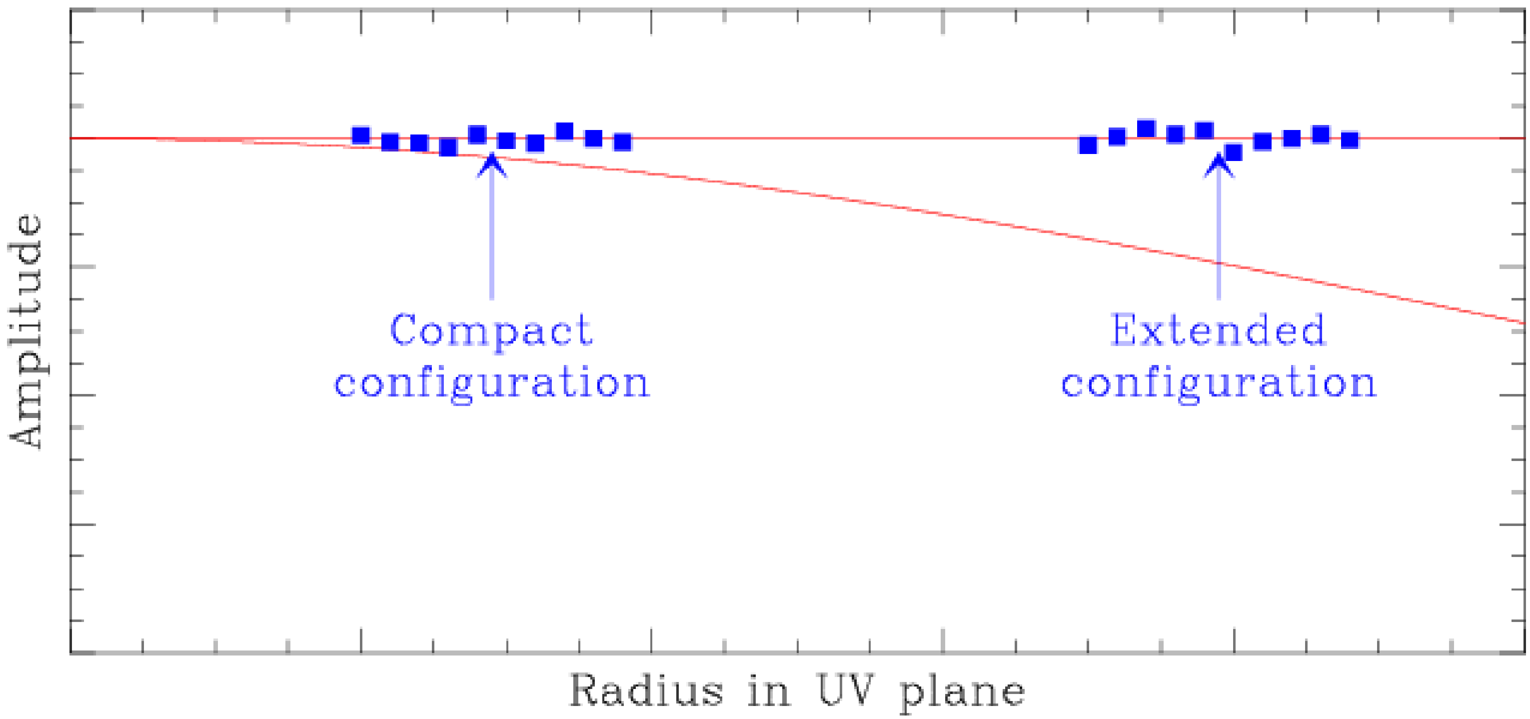
Flux calibration
The problems

- Problem: **all quasars have varying fluxes** (several 10% in a few months) and spectral indexes
- **Cannot rely on a priori antenna efficiency** to measure their fluxes (decorrelation…)
- Need to measure the quasar fluxes against
  - Planets
  - Strong quasars (RF)
  - MWC349, CRL618, …
- Can be **difficult** if a good accuracy is required

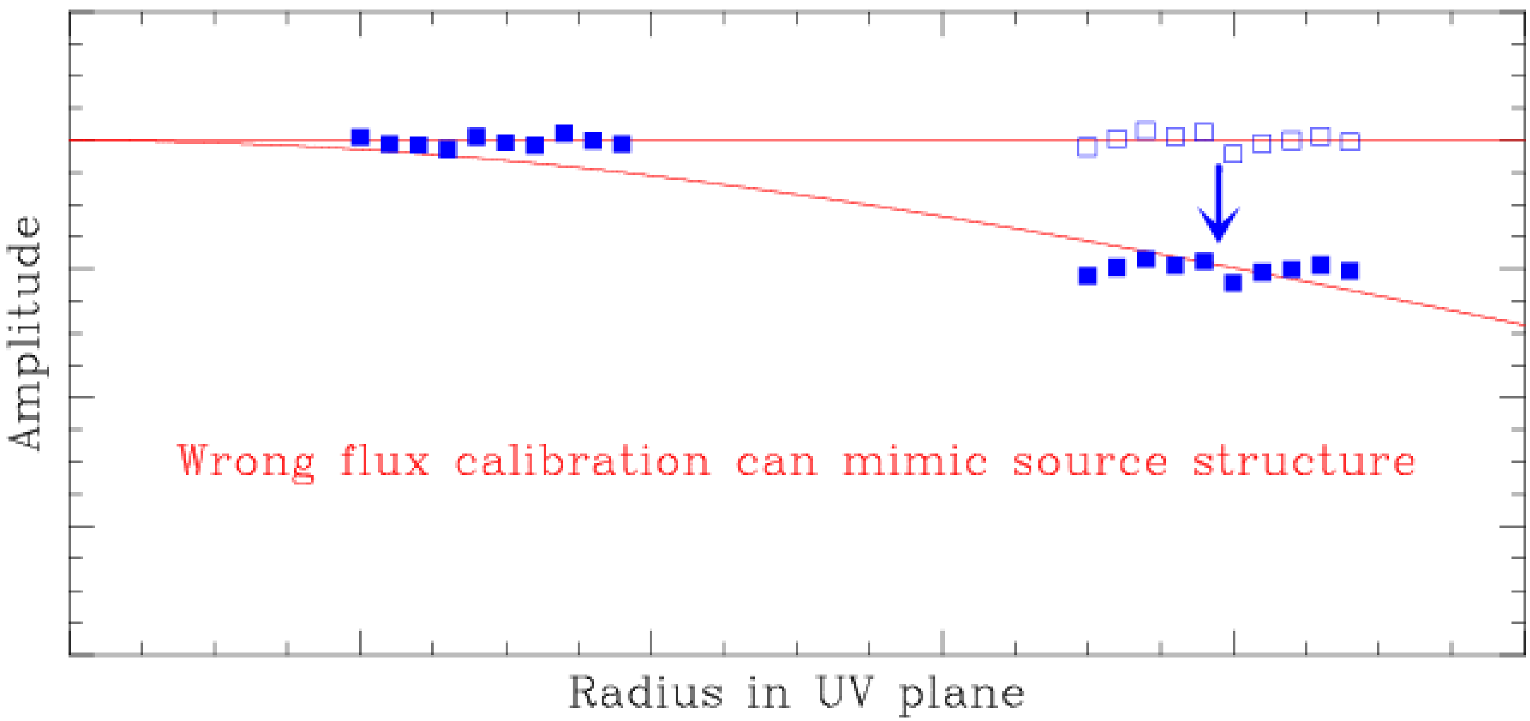
Flux calibration
Not a simple x factor



Flux calibration
Not a simple x factor



Flux calibration
Not a simple x factor



Data calibration
Conclusions

- All calibrations rely on astronomical observations of quasars = point source, continuum
- **Phase** calibration is the most critical for image quality
- **Flux** calibration is the most difficult in practice